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VIII.—THE VISION DELECTABLE OF ALFONSO
DE LA TORRE AND MAIMONIDES'S GUIDE
OF THE PERPLEXED

The *Visión Delectable* was composed by Alfonso de la Torre, probably between the years 1430 and 1440, at the request of don Juan de Beamonte, for the instruction of the young Prince Carlos of Viana. This work, which gained its author the epithet of *el gran filósofo* among his contemporaries, was published about the year 1480 and subsequently appeared in several Castilian editions.¹ It was translated into Catalan in 1484, and into Italian by Domenico Delphini in 1556, without mention of the original author. This Italian version was re-translated into Spanish by a Spanish Jew, Francisco de Cáceres, and published at Frankfort in 1623.²

The book treats in allegorical form the Seven Liberal Arts of the medieval curriculum, and also the chief problems of scholastic philosophy, theology, ethics, and politics. While meditating upon his work, the author falls into a deep sleep, and sees in a vision the threatened destruction

¹The earliest edition known was probably printed at Zamora about the year 1480. See Ticknor, *Historia de la literatura española*, Vol. I, p. 447. I have noted the following subsequent editions: Tolosa, 1489; Zaragoza, 1496; Sevilla, 1526 and 1538; Ferrara, 1554. It was republished by don Adolfo de Castro in Volume xxxvi of the *Biblioteca de autores españoles*. My references are to this last edition, which is very incorrect. This work furnished considerable material to Luis Mejía in the composition of his apologue, *De la ociosidad y el trabajo*, published in 1546. Ticknor, *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 94.

²The translation of Cáceres was republished at Amsterdam in 1663. It was included in the Index of 1750. Amador de los Ríos, *Historia crítica de la literatura española*, Vol. VII, p. 57.

of the world. Suddenly the maiden, Gramática, appears and also the child Entendimiento, whom she received and instructs in the mysteries of her art. The first six chapters of the First Part describe Entendimiento's ascent of the mountain and his visits to the dwellings of Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astrology, thus completing his instruction in the Seven Liberal Arts. I have shown in another article¹ that Alfonso de la Torre was indebted to the *Anticlaudianus* of Alanus de Insulis for most of his allegorical material, and that the chapters on grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, and music are derived from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. The chapter on logic is borrowed from Al-Ghazzālī's treatise on that subject included in his *Makāsīd al-Falāsifa*, which was translated into Latin about the middle of the twelfth century by Dominicus Gundisalvi. I wish to show here that chapters eight to nineteen of the First Part, which discuss the most important questions of scholastic philosophy and theology, are derived from the *Moreh Nebuchim* or *Guide of the Perplexed* of Maimonides, the greatest of all Jewish philosophers.²

¹ *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Visión Delectable of Alfonso de la Torre*, *Romanic Review*, Vol. IV.

² Sr. Menéndez y Pelayo in his *Orígenes de la Novela*, Vol. I, p. cxxiv, says of the *Visión Delectable*: "*Como texto de lengua científica, no tiene rival dentro del siglo XV; la grandeza sintética de la concepción infunde respeto; algunos trozos son de altísima elocuencia, y la novedad y atrevimiento de algunas de sus ideas merecen consideración atenta, que en lugar más oportuno pensamos dedicarlas.*" He adds in a note: "*Por ejemplo, su teoría del profetismo, muy semejante á la de Maimónides; sus ideas sobre el entendimiento agente, más afines á las de Avempace y Algazel que á las de los escolásticos,*" etc. Had Sr. Menéndez y Pelayo, who was so well equipped for the task, been permitted to investigate more closely the indebtedness of Alfonso de la Torre to Maimonides, he would have found that the *Guide of the Perplexed* furnished far more material

Moses ben Maimon, or Maimonides, as he is more generally called, was born March 30, 1135 at Cordova, the center of intellectual activity of Arabs and Jews in the Middle Ages.¹ His father, Maimon ben Joseph, was descended from a family of scholars, and was himself a learned Talmudist, mathematician, and astronomer. Early in life, the young Moses devoted himself to the study of the Bible, the Talmud, natural sciences, and mathematics, but the times were not conducive to the peaceful development of science and philosophy. In 1148, when he was thirteen years old, Cordova was captured by the fanatical Almohades, and both Jews and Christians were given the choice of embracing Islam, exile, or death. It is believed that his family preferred exile, and after many trials and hardships, settled at Fez (1160) and later (1165) at Fostat, near Cairo, where Maimonides completed his famous commentary on the *Mishnah* (1168). Although busily occupied with the practice of medicine at the court of Saladin, he found time to continue his theological studies, and there completed in 1190 his *Dalalât al-hâirin* or *Guide of the Perplexed*, more commonly known by its Hebrew title,

to the *Visión Delectable* than appeared on a superficial examination. The credit for the first suggestion of this indebtedness, however, belongs entirely to him.

¹ The chief works which I have used in the study of the life and works of Maimonides are: Louis-Germain Lévy, *Maimonide*, Paris, 1911; J. Münz, *Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides), sein Leben und seine Werke*, Frankfort, 1912; the articles published under the direction of Bacher, Brann, and Simonsen with the title *Moses ben Maimon, sein Leben, seine Werke und sein Einfluss*, by the Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums, Vol. I, Leipzig, 1908; Grätz, *Geschichte der Juden*, Vol. v, Leipzig, 1875; Joel, *Die Religionsphilosophie des Moses ben Maimon*, Breslau, 1859, and Bonilla y San Martín, *Historia de la filosofía española*, Vol. II, Madrid, 1911, Chap. 12-18. I am indebted to my colleague, Dr. Isaac Husik, for several excellent suggestions.

Moreh Nebuchim. Like most of his works, it was written in Arabic with Hebrew characters in order to make it more accessible to Jews who had forgotten their own language. When he died in 1204, his reputation as the greatest Jewish scholar and theologian of his time was firmly established.

I need not dwell here upon the many-sided intellectual activity of Maimonides. He made important contributions to the astronomical and medical knowledge of his time. In his *Commentary to the Mishnah*, he was the first to formulate the creed of Judaism. His codification of the Rabbinical law, entitled *Mishneh-Thorah*, shows his powers as a dogmatic theologian. It was, however, as the author of the *Guide of the Perplexed* that he earned the title of the Jewish Aristotle, and this work still remains one of the most important contributions to Jewish theology.

He was well acquainted with Aristotelian philosophy through the medium of the Arabic commentators, as well as with ancient Jewish literature. He had amassed a rich store of philosophical knowledge which he determined to employ in the service of Judaism. He believed that Jewish theological doctrines agreed with the results obtained by philosophy, and attempted in this work to reconcile the Old Testament and the teachings of Aristotle. The *Guide* at once attracted great attention, and was translated during his lifetime and with his co-operation, into Hebrew by Rabbi Samuel ibn Tibbon. This translation was completed in 1204 and is a faithful reproduction of the ideas of the master. A few years later it was again translated into Hebrew by the poet Judah Charizi. The poetical gifts of this translator were wholly unsuited to the more serious task of interpreting theology, and his version met with little favor.

It is not within my province to discuss the fate of the *Guide* in Mohammedan circles, nor the bitter quarrel which it provoked among Jewish theologians, dividing them into two hostile camps,¹ nor the great influence which it exerted upon the subsequent development of Jewish theology. It had a definite influence upon Christian scholasticism, and it may be truly said that no work of a Jewish thinker was so diligently read by Christian scholars during the Middle Ages as the *Guide of the Perplexed*. A Latin translation of the *Guide* was composed as early as the first half of the thirteenth century, probably at the request of the Emperor Frederick II, who is known to have been well acquainted with the work. The investigations of Joel and Guttman have shown that the two celebrated Masters of the Roman Church, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, owe a great deal to Maimonides, and in many respects it may be said that the *Guide of the Perplexed* is a precursor of the *Summa Theologiae*.² The influence of the *Guide* is evident in the *Speculum Majus* of Vincent de Beauvais and in the works of Duns Scotus. The Latin version of Augustin Giustiniani, a

¹ See N. Brüll, *Die Polemik für und gegen Maimuni im XIIIten Jahrhundert*, pub. in *Jahrbücher für jüd. Geschichte und Literatur*, Frankfurt, 1879.

² See Joel, *Das Verhältniss Albert des Grossen zu Moses Maimonides*, Breslau, 1863; Guttman, *Das Verhältniss des Thomas von Aquino zum Judenthum*, Göttingen, 1891; *Die Scholastik des 13. Jahrhunderts in ihren Beziehungen zum Judenthum und zur jüd. Literatur*, Breslau, 1902, and *Der Einfluss der maimonidischen Philosophie auf das christl. Abendland*, pub. in *Moses ben Maimon, sein Leben, seine Werke und sein Einfluss*, ed. by Bacher, Brann and Simonsen, Vol. I, Leipzig, 1908; David Kaufmann, *Der "Führer" Maimuni's in der Weltliteratur*, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vol. XI, 1898; Isaac Husik, *An Anonymous Mediæval Christian Critic of Maimonides*, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, Vol. II, 1911.

copy of the earlier Latin translation, was published at Paris in 1520, and another Latin translation by John Buxtorf appeared in 1679. Among the many philosophers whom this work has influenced may be mentioned Solomon Maimon, Spinoza, Jean Bodin, Leibniz, Moses Mendelssohn and Hegel. The original Arabic text was first published by Solomon Munk in the middle of the last century, accompanied by a French translation.¹

It is natural and eminently fitting that the earliest known translation of the *Guide* in the vernacular should be in Castilian. This version, which is still preserved in manuscript at the Biblioteca Nacional of Madrid, was composed by Pedro de Toledo at the request of Gómez Suárez de Figueroa.² The first two parts were completed in 1419 and the third in 1432. It is based on the Hebrew version of Charizi. It was translated into Italian in 1580 by Amadeo b. Moïse de Recanati, and again by Jacob Maironi, 1870-1876. It was translated into German by Scheyer (Part III), Fürstenthal (Part I) and Stern (Part II) 1838-64, into French by Munk (1850-66), into Hungarian by Klein (1878-1890), and into English by Friedländer (1884-85).³

By an analysis of the subjects discussed in the *Visión*

¹ *Le Guide des égarés. Traité de Théologie et de Philosophie par Moïse ben Maimon dit Maïmonide, publié pour la première fois dans l'original arabe et accompagné d'une traduction française et de notes critiques, littéraires et explicatives*, Paris, 1850-66.

² See Mario Schiff, *Una traducción española del "More Nebuchim de Maïmonides"*; *notas acerca del manuscrito KK-9 de la Biblioteca Nacional*, pub. in *Revista crítica de historia y literatura españolas, portuguesas é hispano-americanas*, Vol. II. 1897, pp. 160-176 and David Kaufmann, *ibid.*, Vol. XI, pp. 361-65.

³ All of my references are to Friedländer's first edition, *The Guide of the Perplexed of Maimonides*, 3 vols., London, 1884-85. I have also used freely his Analysis of the *Guide* in Vol. I.

Delectable, I wish to show the indebtedness of Alfonso de la Torre to the famous work of Maimonides. When Entendimiento reaches the dwelling of Astrologia (Part I, Chapter VII), he is denied admittance until he strips himself completely of the sordid vestments of false doctrines. On being asked the reason of his coming, Entendimiento replies that he desires to learn the truth concerning the universe, the certainty of the existence of God and of the end and purpose of man. Razón praises the excellence of true knowledge, and Entendimiento expresses surprise that kings, noblemen, and knights do not attain this. Razón then declares the five reasons why men do not learn the truth and certainty of things: (1) Ignorance of the purpose and end of creation; (2) Pleasures of the body dull the spiritual and intellectual senses; (3) Incapacity for learning; (4) Difficulty of acquiring knowledge; (5) Men cling to things learned in childhood. The children of Moors hate Christianity, and peasants detest cities and the refinements of civilized life.¹ Entendimiento is warned that he may not enter until he has banished all such preconceived notions, and he promises to do so, declaring: *No me moverá más la verdad dicha por la boca del cristiano que del judío ó moro ó gentil, si verdades sean todas, ni negaré menos la falsía dicha por la boca de uno que por la boca de otro*, showing a tolerance

¹ In the *Guide*, I, Chap. xxxi, 108-9, Maimonides quotes Alexander of Aphrodisias to the effect that there are three causes which prevent men from acquiring knowledge: (1) arrogance and vain glory; (2) the subtlety and difficulty of any subject; (3) ignorance and want of capacity to comprehend. Maimonides adds as a fourth cause, habit and training. Villagers do not care for the refinements of civilized life, and in the same way a man clings to the opinions formed in his youth. The second cause of Alfonso de la Torre is taken from the *Guide*, I, p. 123 and constitutes one of the reasons why metaphysics can not be made popular.

which was not without danger in the fifteenth century.¹ Verdad then orders that permission be granted him to enter.

Chapter nine is devoted to a description of the allegorical figures Verdad and Razón, and of the garden, filled with marvels of all kinds, into which Entendimiento is introduced. Asked why he has come hither, he replies that he wishes to learn the ultimate purpose of the creation of man. He is then conducted to the dwelling of Sabiduría, all formed of precious stones. She proposes to prove to him the existence of God: that He is ruler of the world, thereby refuting the doctrines of fate, chance, and fortune; that God is the beginning and end of all things, and that man was created for eternal happiness, which cannot be attained until after death. Verdad then states in dialogue form twenty-six propositions to prove the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God, the truth of each one of which is accepted by Entendimiento.²

In the eleventh Chapter, Sabiduría gives philosophical proofs of the existence of God, based on the preceding propositions, all of which are found in the same form in the *Guide*, Part II, Chapter 1.³ Entendimiento is fully convinced of the existence of God, but asks for evidence of the unity of God. Sabiduría adduces the following arguments: (1) If there were two or more Gods, either they would be equal in power, or the contrary would be

¹ Maimonides shows the same love of truth, regardless of the source, in his *Mishneh-Torah*. See Lévy, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

² These correspond closely to the twenty-six propositions, by the aid of which the philosophers prove the existence, unity, and incorporeality of the Primal Cause, quoted by Maimonides in the introduction to the Second Part of his work. The last proposition, *Que el cielo no es engendrabable ni corruptible*, is only admitted as an hypothesis by Maimonides to demonstrate his own theory.

³ Pp. 11-17.

the case. In the first instance, one of the Gods would be superfluous; in the second, one would be imperfect, which would be an abomination; ¹ (2) God is infinite in power, knowledge, and kindness; infinite means incapable of measurement. If there were two infinite Gods, they would be equal; one would be a measure of the other: then neither would be infinite.

Entendimiento is thus convinced of the unity of God, but asks whether He may not be one of the heavenly bodies. Sabiduría replies that this has been disproved by the twenty-second proposition,² namely, that every substance requires an agent for its existence, and continues: *Por estas pruebas se prueba que de necesario hay Dios, y es uno; et no es alguno de los cuerpos visibles ni sensibles; antes es uno, incorpóreo, invisible, inmortal, omnipotente et bienaventurado.* She tells of the Gentiles who worshipped the elements and of those who worshipped the sun, moon, and stars: *De aquestos fueron los sabios en el tiempo de Abrahan, y éstos decían que los bienes deste mundo descendían á los mortales por el sacrificio que facían á los cielos et á las estrellas,* etc., and tells of their absurd beliefs and practices. This is merely an unintelligent summary of Chapter xxix of the Third Part of the *Guide*, which Maimonides devotes to the Sabeian religion of star-worship. Sabiduría then gives

¹ This argument is found in the *Guide*, I, Chap. lxxxv, p. 360, as one of the propositions of the Mutakallimūn or Arabic theologians, to prove the unity of God. Maimonides, however, objects that it would not be an imperfection in either deity to act exclusively within his respective province. He treats the belief in the unity of God in the *Guide*, I, Chaps. I and II.

² In reality it is the twenty-fifth proposition. Cf. *Guide*, II, p. 8: "Each compound substance consists of matter and form, and requires an agent for its existence."

a brief account of classical mythology, the greater part of which is borrowed from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, Lib. VIII, Chapter XI, *De Diis Gentium*. Fortunately, she adds, God had freed mankind from these errors.

The twelfth Chapter deals with the power of God. Sabiduría declares that God's power is limitless and in no way imperfect, but Entendimiento objects that many of the things desired by God do not come to pass, and therefore his power cannot be limitless. Sabiduría replies: *El poder de Dios es en dos maneras, así como su voluntad es en otras dos maneras; ca hay una voluntad de Dios, la cual es comparada et causada, et hay otra absoluta. La absoluta siempre se cumple, la causada cúmplese segun el cumplimiento de sus causas.* It is a mistake to say that God is not omnipotent because he cannot create another God like unto himself, or because he has no power in matters which imply an evident contradiction. Another mistaken belief is that God, without legitimate cause, could violate the laws of Nature; for if God wishes to create one thing from another, he must first deprive it of its original essence and form, and endow it with a new essence and form. God can do all things which are possible and which do not abrogate his power. This theory that impossible things are not ascribed to the Creator is developed by Maimonides in the *Guide*, III, Chapter xv.

The paragraph which follows on the omniscience of God is based upon Maimonides's discussion of the same in the *Guide*, III, Chapter xvi. God is omniscient, but not in the way in which men understand this. Sabiduría then explains what is meant by the kindness of God, refuting the opinion of ignorant men that the evils in the world far outnumber the blessings, by the argument that man, who is only an infinitesimal part of the universe, believes

that the whole universe exists only for himself. The author here develops, with additional illustrations, the theory advanced by Maimonides, *Guide*, III, Chapter XII.

In the thirteenth Chapter, Sabiduría explains the four false doctrines concerning the Providence of God, and proves wherein lies their falsity.

1. Some have said that all things in heaven and on earth are subject to chance and fortune, and in their folly they even denied the existence of the Ruler of the world. This blasphemy was refuted by Aristotle.

2. Nothing occurs without cause, and all things are in the same manner caused by God. When a leaf falls, or a spider is trampled upon, or when a fly is killed, it is as much the result of God's will as the destruction of a kingdom, the conflagration of a city, or the death of a multitude of people. This doctrine would imply that precepts are useless and that freedom of action is denied.

3. The Providence of God resides in the separate intelligences, that is, in the angels, stars, or heavens. Since Divine Providence does not extend beyond the sphere of the moon, the sublunary world is left to chance.

4. All things in the world, both good and evil, are ruled by fate, governed principally by the constellations and stars.

The first of these propositions corresponds to the first of the four theories concerning Divine Providence mentioned by Maimonides, namely, that there is no Providence at all for anything in the universe; everything is subject to chance.¹ The second proposition corresponds to the third of Maimonides, namely, that everything is fore-ordained.² The third proposition and most of the illus-

¹ *Guide*, III, Chap. XVII, pp. 65-66.

² *Guide*, III, pp. 68-70.

trations are taken from the second theory of the Philosophers, discussed and refuted by Maimonides.¹ The fourth proposition cited by Alfonso de la Torre, concerning the part played by fate in the affairs of men, is not found in the *Guide*. The fourth argument mentioned by Maimonides is that Providence bestows its blessings upon all creatures according to their merits; therefore, all beings, even the lowest animals, if innocently injured or killed, receive compensation in a future life. Maimonides cites as fifth the Jewish doctrine that evils and blessings are bestowed upon men in proportion to their merits.

In the fourteenth Chapter, after having dismissed these opinions which are false and yet contain an element of truth, Sabiduría proceeds to expound the true doctrine concerning the Providence of God. Some things are ordained by God, others are left to fate and Nature, others are subject to the choice and will of men, and others depend upon chance and fortune.² God created the world, endowing it with the greatest perfection which it could receive, and then the angels with the highest degree of perfection, and after that, the Intelligences and heavenly bodies. He endowed men with reason in order that they might serve him, but since excesses both in man and Nature were inevitable because of the imperfection of the substance, he gave to the planets and other stars authority over all things created and corruptible. Nature then instituted the principle of generation and corruption. By a concrete illustration she shows that the same incident may be imputed to the Providence of God, or to the influence of the planets (fate), or to free-will, or to ever-changing fortune. *En aquesta manera no se siguen inconvenientes*

¹ *Guide*, III, pp. 66-68.

² *Guide* II, Chap. XLVIII.

ningunos, y damos á Dios bendito su perficion, et dejamos al fado su constelación, et á la virtud su libertad, et á la fortuna su mutacion. This explanation is not very satisfactory, but the author adds a phrase on the freedom of the will at the end of the Chapter which modifies all that precedes. *Los hombres no pueden acusar la Providencia ni el fado ni la fortuna, ca por fuerza es que ellos hayan la culpa en ser malos, y el premio por ser buenos; ca en su poder es de hacer lo uno et dejar lo otro.* Maimonides believed that men are endowed with free-will, and that in the lower or sublunary portion of the universe, Divine Providence does not extend to the individual members of species except in the case of mankind.¹

The power of God is again discussed in the fifteenth Chapter. Entendimiento asks why God did not create only good things in the world, since he foresaw all good and evil things before the Creation. Sabiduría replies that God is only omnipotent over all possible things; that corruption is inherent in the substance from which man was created. Man and the world might have been created perfect, except for the imperfections in the substance.²

Chapter sixteen treats of the Creation of the world. Sabiduría declares that only one thing must exist of necessity and that all other things have possibility of existence, *pues cierto es que toda cosa posible tiene causa por la cual es, et sin aquella no sería así*³ . . . *Así es el mundo en respecto de Dios glorioso, et todas las cosas que en él son, que es efecto y cosa producida, ó obra de Dios sacada de su*

¹ *Guide*, III, Chap. xvii.

² This theory is found in the *Guide*, III, Chap. viii, pp. 24-25, and Chap. xv.

³ *Guide*, II, Chap. xii, p. 57: "It is clear that whenever a thing is produced, an efficient cause must exist for the production of the thing that has not existed previously."

*no ser á su ser, y su perfeccion despues que no era, de Dios recibe la perfeccion toda y el ser que tiene.*¹ By his own volition, God saw that the world could not be created without material, efficient and final causes; he created matter, and from it made all things except the Intelligences and angels. He created the heavens from the fifth essence, and imperfect things from matter. *Mas en la primera produccion del mundo, todo esto se hizo sin primeria ni posterimeria de tiempo ninguno que sea.*²

Entendimiento objects that since man is engendered from man, and matter must be produced from some other matter, how then could God create matter? Sabiduría replies that man errs in judging the past by his own knowledge and tells how difficult it would be to make a boy whose mother had died at his birth, understand the truth concerning conception and gestation. Man has the same difficulty in understanding the actions of God.³

Chapter seventeen discusses the nature of angels or Intelligences. Sabiduría, agreeing with Maimonides, declares that there are as many Intelligences as there are movements of the spheres. In understanding they resemble God and delight in the contemplation of his power, wisdom, kindness, beauty, and glory. They do his will, are immutable, and are not subject to time.⁴ Entendi-

¹ This doctrine of the *Creatio ex nihilo* is frequently discussed and approved by Maimonides.

² Maimonides states the same doctrine in the *Guide*, II, Chap. XIII, p. 61, in denying the existence of time before the Creation.

³ *Guide*, II, Chap. XVII, p. 77: "It is quite impossible to infer from the nature which a thing possesses after having passed through all stages of its development, what the condition of the thing has been in the moment when this process commenced; nor does the condition of a thing at this moment show what its previous condition has been." The illustration of the child whose mother died in childbirth is taken from the same chapter, pp. 77-79.

⁴ *Guide*, II, Chap. v.

miento asks whether angels can sin, and on receiving a negative reply, objects that those had sinned who tried to become equal to God, yet they did not partake of the corrupting substance. Sabiduría replies that her answer must be accepted by faith, and sums up the doctrines concerning the evil spirits.

Entendimiento asks regarding the size of angels, and is told that if they were corporeal, they would be like the third part of the world,¹ but that their virtue extends farther, just as a man's soul extends throughout his whole body. The term "angel" means messenger, and all prophets sent to the world were angels.²

Entendimiento asks the nature of the protection accorded men by angels, and Sabiduría, reproaching him for his ignorance, says: *Un hombre de los voluntarios, si le dijese que un angel entraba en el vientre de una mujer, el cual, segun te dije, es tan grande como la tercera parte del mundo, y que él facia los ojos al niño et las narices, y que él le hacia los otros miembros, creerlo hia; et si le decian que la simiente del hombre tenia virtud informativa fasta el advenir del ánima racional, no lo creeria.*³ Man has intelligence which is the good angel sent from Heaven, and from his substance he has sensuality, his evil counsellor.

Sometimes the soul is so perfect that the light of the intelligence allows a man to foretell the future; in other cases, when the soul is less perfect, a man may have true

¹ *Guide*, II, p. 53.

² *Guide*, II, Chap. VI, pp. 37-38: "Angel means 'messenger'; hence everyone that is entrusted with a certain message is an angel." This theory is developed at length by Maimonides in his chapters devoted to Prophecy.

³ This illustration is translated from the *Guide*, II, Chap. VI, pp. 39-40.

dreams.¹ Sabiduría then mentions the various degrees of prophecy,² according to the manner in which the prophets received the message from God, and discusses the beliefs of mankind in regard to magic and divination. Magic was instituted by Zoroaster and was continued by Democritus. This error became so general that the Egyptians believed that Moses employed this art in changing sticks to serpents and water to blood. She then mentions the following kinds of magicians and explains their functions: *divinos, fitónicos, idólatras, arriolos, astrólogos, magos, arúspices, geneáticos, matemáticos, agoreros, prestigiatóres, sortílegos, geománticos, epirmánticos, hidrománticos* and *ariománticos*.³ Many of these practises are merely superstition and idolatry, but the astrologer may make use of magic and divination for good ends.⁴

The question of the final cause of the world is then discussed. Entendimiento asks whether the universe, angels, heavens and earth were created for man. Sabiduría replies that God is the efficient and final cause of the world, and that he wished all things created to have some share in his kindness and wisdom. It is an error to say that the angels, heavens and stars were created by God for men;⁵

¹ The doctrine that the real essence of prophecy is perfection acquired in a dream or vision is treated by Maimonides in Part II, Chap. xxxvi. He there says that the action of the imaginative faculty during sleep is the same as at the time when it receives a prophecy, only in the first case it is not fully developed and has not yet reached its highest degree.

² These are treated in the *Guide*, II, Chap. xlv.

³ All of this material is borrowed from Isidore's *Etymologiae*, Lib. viii, Chap. ix.

⁴ This is an addition of the Spanish author. Maimonides believed that astrology is not a science at all and should be given no credence.

⁵ Maimonides, *Guide*, III, Chap. xiii, teaches that the universe does not exist for man's sake, in refutation of the doctrine of Aristotle. He, however, concludes that the question as to the object of the Creation must be left unanswered.

that would be like manufacturing a very heavy hammer in order to make a needle.¹ Inferior things are subject to more perfect things; by his understanding, man rules the lower animals, and is subject in turn to the angels, and the latter to God.²

The final cause of man is in three manners: (1) Man may spend his life speculating on the study of the sciences and the knowledge of God. This is the *vida angélica*; (2) Man may follow the dictates of his passions. This is the *vida bestial*; (3) Man may be sincere, prudent, and temperate. This is the *vida humana*. The first and third correspond to the fourth and third kinds of perfection attainable by man, according to Maimonides. The author appears to have misunderstood the second kind of perfection as stated in the *Guide*, namely, bodily perfection.³

The eighteenth Chapter opens with a description of the maiden Naturaleza. At her feet was Aristotle, and grouped about her were Thales of Miletus, Empedocles, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Pythagoras, Democritus, Anaximander, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Averroes, and Albertus Magnus. Razón explains that Entendimiento has come in quest of knowledge and Aristotle suggests that he be instructed in the first beginning of things. Naturaleza then expounds the various theories concerning the *primer principio* and then declares the true doctrine, following in great part Aristotle's *Physics*.

She continues, drawing a parallel between the universe

¹ The same figure is used by Maimonides in this connection, *Guide*, III, Chap. XIV, p. 58.

² *Guide*, III; Chap. XIII, p. 53: "Man is superior to everything formed of earthly matter, but not to other beings; he is found exceedingly inferior when his existence is compared with that of the spheres, and *a fortiori* when compared with that of the Intelligences."

³ *Guide*, III, Chap. LIV, pp. 300-303.

and man.¹ *Primero has de pensar que este mundo es uno, y es por una orden proporcionado muy ingeniosa et por un vínculo indisoluble: y es uno, así como un hombre es uno; conviene á saber, Pedro ó Juan;*² *y así como en el hombre hay diversidad de miembros y de virtudes que mueven et son movidas, et otras que mandan et otras que obedescen, asimesmo en el mundo. E así como en el hombre hay carne, nervios, huesos et humores diversos, así la espera del cielo se compone de muchas esperas, et de cuatro elementos en lo que se compone de aquellos; é así como aquí no hay lugar ninguno vacío, mas es todo lleno, así en el mayor mundo es todo lleno, y en el centro de medio es la pella de la tierra, á la cual circunda el agua, et aquella es circundada del aire y aquel del fuego, y aquella es circundada del cuerpo quinto, que es el cielo.*³

She explains the motion of the spheres, their uniformity of revolution and the theory of the mingling of the elements by which are engendered and destroyed all created things, and by which the various phenomena of Nature may be explained. Alfonso de la Torre here follows closely the doctrine of Maimonides as stated in the *Guide*, Part I, Chapter LXXII.

Naturaleza, still following the same chapter of the *Guide*, gives a minute description of the analogy between the Universe or Cosmos and Man, the Microcosmos. There are four forces present in every living thing: attraction, retention, digestion and secretion; and it is through an

¹ This is borrowed almost literally from the *Guide*, I, Chap. LXXII.

² *Guide*, I, Chap. LXXII, p. 288: "Know that this Universe, in its entirety, is nothing but one individual being; that is to say, the outermost heavenly sphere, together with all included therein, is as regards individuality, beyond all question a single being like Said and Omar."

³ *Guide*, I, p. 290.

imperfection in some one of these that man must endure illness. In the same manner, the elements are subject to excesses of various kinds, which produce calamities in the world, and *Naturaleza* enumerates a few of the catastrophes caused in the world by the excess of some element. Most of these examples are taken from Isidore's *Etymologiae*, *De Diluviis*,¹ and show that Alfonso de la Torre's attitude toward geography and physics was as uncritical as that of Pliny or Solinus.

The analogy between the Universe and Man is still further developed. In the *mayor mundo*, there is a first intelligence which is God, who makes all things move; likewise there is in man the virtue of understanding by reason of which he is honored and compared to the angels. In this respect alone he resembles God, for in other things he is like dumb animals.² The understanding of man is the best thing in the world, for it is not of the substance of the earth, but rather of the light of the intelligence. He who understands reason must excel among men of lesser understanding, since he more closely resembles God than they. The closer he comes to God, the better does he know, love, and obey him: and the more man loves him, the greater delight does he take in virtuous actions.³ *Por aquestas causas ya dichas el hombre es dicho menor mundo; ca hay en él figura et complimiento del mayor, et no decimos esto de todo hombre, sino del intelectual; ca el otro no es hombre, sino que tiene un grado sobre el jimia ó bruto.*⁴

¹ Lib. XIII, Chap. XXII.

² *Guide*, I, p. 303.

³ *Guide*, III, Chap. LI.

⁴ *Guide*, I, Chap. LXXII, p. 303: "This attribute (of being a microcosm) has been given to man alone on account of his peculiar faculty of thinking. I mean the intellect, *i. e.*, the hylic intellect which appertains to no other living being."

Chapter nineteen opens with a discussion of the well known theory of Maimonides that one may arrive at a more perfect conception of God by a knowledge of his negative rather than of his positive attributes.¹ Entendimiento is convinced of the truth of this doctrine by the concrete illustration of the ship, borrowed from Maimonides. If ten persons know of the existence of a ship and none of them know its attributes, he arrives at the most correct notion of its nature who can ascribe to it the greatest number of negative attributes. In like manner, man can come nearer to a knowledge of God by a conception of his negative attributes.

Entendimiento asks how some men can be nearer God than others, and Naturaleza replies with an apologue. A hundred men went out hunting with a king, lost their way, and returned half blinded by the reflection of the sun on the snow; some lost their way completely; others entered the city but did not see the palace; others entered the palace, but could not see the king. In like manner, when men approach God, although deprived of understanding, some are nearer to him than others. This illustration is borrowed with a few unimportant changes from the *Guide*, Part III, Chapter LI. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the immortality of the soul. Here again the source is the *Guide*, which reproduces, except in a few details, the teaching of Aristotle, according to the conception of his commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias.

The twentieth Chapter is a recapitulation of the things seen by Entendimiento in the dwelling of Naturaleza, and

¹ *Guide*, I, Chap. LX, p. 221. The first part of the *Guide* is devoted to an attack upon anthropomorphism. The first forty-nine chapters prepare for his theory of attributes.

a summary of the doctrines already treated concerning the creation, fate, corporeal objects, time, nature of the sky, climate, the various natural phenomena, and the peculiarities of certain birds and animals, with anecdotes about them in the manner of Pliny.

The Second Part of the *Visión Delectable*, which is chiefly concerned with ethics and politics, shows less indebtedness to the *Guide of the Perplexed* than the First Part. The first Chapter describes the arrival of Entendimiento at the abode of Razón, a magnificent building in the *estilo mudéjar*, guarded by the Cardinal Virtues. Razón and Verdad occupy the highest places, and the blessed company of men of great authority are seated about them, except Socrates and Seneca, who sit at their feet. Entendimiento expresses his gratitude for the information which he has already received, but cannot understand why man alone breaks the laws of Nature, while the intelligences, heavens and planets obey the will of God. Either God is indifferent to man and has not created him for any purpose, or man is indifferent to God, and to the motive for his creation.

He is granted permission to explain himself more fully, and argues that we should expect to find all the virtues among the clergy and ministers of justice, but that these classes are more dissolute than other men. His arraignment of the evils of the clergy is a furious one. *Dudo si hallaréis en el mundo gente más apartada de saber; ante pasesque acordadamente han escogido los más idiotas para aquello.* They are ignorant, make fun of knowledge which yields no financial return, are intemperate, gluttonous, adulterous, tainted with simony, false and hypocritical. He also finds many abuses among the ministers of justice, and adds: *y subió en mi corazon que los de la casa*

primera nos engañaban, porque decían que había otro mundo y no curaban dél, y que era falsía; y que ellos así lo entendían que era burla, ca en otra manera trabajarían por haberlo: y los de la casa segunda pensé que nos hacían servirlos et complir sus leyes, et obedescer sus mandamientos por temor, y que no había otra cosa sino nacer et morir.

Various other questions are then discussed, such as the ultimate aim of human endeavor; the three kinds of lives, *vida contemplativa*, *bestial*, and *humana*; the passions inherent in men; the reason why there are more evil men than good; why God did not create man so that he could not sin; whether things are subject to fate, and the benefits of the four Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Courage, and Temperance. In the last named subject, the author shows an intimate acquaintance with Aristotle's *Ethics*. Various questions of economics and politics are also treated, including a description of the gradual development of society, much of which is taken from Isidore's *Etymologiae*.¹ Verdad then gives a brief account of the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and of the doctrine of the Trinity. She declares that only with this true belief can man be saved.

Razón offers to tell Entendimiento the doctrine of the ultimate end of man, a doctrine which has been the opinion of all philosophers and especially of the wise men of the Gentiles, Jews, Moors, and of some Christians: *en los gentiles, Anaxágoras, Platon et Aristóteles; en los judíos, rabí Aquiba*² *et rabí Abrahan et Benazra*,³ *et maestro*

¹ Lib. iv, Chap. i; Lib. v; Lib. viii, Chap. xi.

² Akiba ben Joseph, the father of Rabbinical Judaism, was a Jewish doctor of the first half of the second century, and the most remarkable rabbi produced by Judaism in Palestine.

³ Abraham ben Meir ibn Ezra (1092 ?-1167) was the author of

Moisen de Egipto; ¹ en los moros ha sido opinion de Alfabeto, Avicena et Algazel; ² y de los cristianos han sido, segun pienso, Alberto Magno et Gil, ermitaño, et otros muchos.

Razón declares that before a man attains eternal happiness, his understanding must be purged of all false doctrines and his will must be freed from all evil appetites. Men of this kind receive the highest degree of perfection and resemble angels. They flee the world and spend their lives in the contemplation of the glory of God. This is Maimonides's doctrine of the conditions necessary before one receives the gift of prophecy. Entendimiento thanks God for having allowed him to learn these secrets hidden from men, and asks permission to remain in that celestial company.

The author then declares that he had written of what he had seen, when the vision was ended, and asks his patron that the work should not pass into the hands of a third person, lest he be unjustly criticized. *Y eso mesmo seria redargüido porque lo puse en palabras vulgares, et toqué tan abiertamente las cosas encubiertas y secretas, como hasta hoy ninguno lo haya querido hacer en los que han escripto antes de agora, et por ventura me argüirian los tales de presuntuoso et audaz.* He completes the book with a salutation to the young Prince Carlos, and asks that it be accepted as the first fruits of his labors.

The close relationship of this work with the Moreh

works of great value on Biblical exegesis, Hebrew grammar, religious philosophy, mathematics and astronomy.

¹ The reference is to Maimonides, who was often styled in this way by the scholastics.

² No comment is necessary to the names of Al-Fārābī, Avicenna and Al-Ghazzālī.

Nebuchim might support the theory that Alfonso de la Torre was a Jewish convert to Christianity, who tried to reconcile the teaching of Maimonides with Christian doctrine. It is probable that Delphini's version was translated into Spanish by the Spanish Jew, Francisco de Cáceres, because the latter recognized that Chapters VIII-XIX of the First Part of the *Visión Delectable* are really a commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*.¹ In view of the hostility to the Jews in Spain, culminating in the edict of expulsion, it was a dangerous attempt to embody the teachings of the great Jewish theologian in a work which purported to be Christian.

Gallardo² mentions a certain Bachiller de la Torre who translated the *Ethics* of Aristotle in a version which was published at Seville in 1493. He adds in a note: *No sabemos si este Bachiller sería persona distinta del que sigue, i. e., the author of the Visión Delectable*. This would not be difficult to believe, since Alfonso de la Torre shows an intimate knowledge of this work.

Gallardo also quotes a manuscript account of the establishment of the Inquisition at Toledo in 1485, which is not without interest.³ All the *judaizantes* were ordered to embrace the Catholic faith within forty days, but in the first two weeks of the allotted time, not a single Jewish convert to Christianity had availed himself of this oppor-

¹ Cáceres omitted in his version Chapter xv of the Second Part, dealing with the life of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity. I am indebted for this information to my colleague, Dr. Walther P. Fischer, who kindly examined the copy of Cáceres's version in the Boston Public Library.

² *Ensayo de una Biblioteca de libros raros y curiosos*, Vol. iv, col. 759-61.

³ This document has also been published in Vol. XIII of the *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, pp. 292-293.

tunity to renounce his own religion. It was then learned that the Jews had planned to revolt during the Corpus Christi procession. *E plugo á nuestro Redemptor Jesu-Cristo que la víspera del día de Corpus-Cristi fué sabida e descubierta la dicha traycion. E Gómez Manrique que era Corregidor á la sazón en la dicha cibdad por el Rey, prendió á algunos conversos que eran en la traycion, e supo la verdad e lo que tenían ordenado. E otro día, antes que la procesion saliese, mandó enforcar un hombre de los dichos que prendió. Y despues prendieron al Bachiller de la Torre que era uno de los capitanes, y lo colgaron, e á otros cuatro hombres.*

I merely quote this document as a possible means of identifying the author of the *Visión Delectable* with the unfortunate Bachiller de la Torre whose death is here mentioned. The name is so common in Spain that the document presented is of slight value, but the *Visión Delectable* contains such conclusive proof of the author's familiarity with Jewish theology, that the identification may not be entirely unsupported.

However, the fact that the work of Maimonides was used to so considerable an extent by Alfonso de la Torre should not be without interest to the student of Spanish letters. One more title is hereby added to the list of philosophical works which have been influenced by the *Guide of the Perplexed*.

J. P. WICKERSHAM CRAWFORD.